

BLUE DOGS ENDORSE PAY-AS-YOU-GO LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the pay-as-you-go legislation that the House will be considering later this week. This is a bill that the Blue Dogs and I have endorsed for the last several Congresses. It is a priority of this President and of the House leadership and of more than 165 cosponsors of this legislation. I'm always intrigued by those who would oppose PAYGO, like my friend, Mr. PENCE from Indiana, who spoke earlier that basically criticized the deficit spending that has occurred, I assume that he would be critical of that in the last previous administration and this administration, but yet he seems to oppose the one tool that we have that has proven to control deficit spending.

The principle is simple, Mr. Speaker. If you have new spending programs, then you have to pay for them. It is very simple. PAYGO was one of the tools that led this country in the 1990s to record surpluses. However, that tool, PAYGO, and others that were in place, were allowed to expire under President Bush and the Republican leadership of this body in 2002.

Those who claim that PAYGO didn't work need simply to look at the numbers. When it was on the books, we had balanced budgets and even record surpluses. But after it was allowed to expire, we saw the explosion of new spending programs and spiraling deficits to go along with it. By putting PAYGO back into law, we will get back on the path toward fiscal responsibility and long-term sustainability.

It is no secret by anybody that works in this place and now even out in the country, that we have an unsustainable budget picture looking forward. When you have a budget hole, Mr. Speaker, the first rule of thumb, the first rule you need to follow is stop digging. PAYGO does that by ensuring that new programs that are enacted must be paid for. We owe it to our children and to their children to stop digging this hole deeper.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this PAYGO legislation in order to return to fiscal discipline.

PAYGO WILL BRING ABOUT FISCAL DISCIPLINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I'm here, too, to join in advocacy for the PAYGO legislation that is going to come before the House floor this week. PAYGO is what it sounds like. If we have a new program, we have to find a way to pay for it, either through cuts or revenues. If we have a proposed tax cut, we have to find a way to pay for it, either in a

reduction in programs elsewhere or a shifting of priorities and spending.

It is a very simple, elemental approach. If you're going to buy something, you have to pay for it. Families know it, in their family budgets, they have to do it all of the time. And government really is no different. It is no different because in the end, if we borrow money, at some point we are going to have to pay it back. We have gotten into a habit in this Congress of not paying for things, in some cases, expenditure programs, and in other cases tax cuts.

We have had some back and forth this morning with our friends on the other side of the aisle, and without getting into the blame game, which doesn't get us anywhere, there is an irrefutable fact, and that is that in the past 8 years with the tax cuts, with Medicare part D that was not funded, with a war in Iraq and a war in Afghanistan on the credit card, we have gone from the largest surplus in the history of this country to the largest deficit in the history of this country.

What it means is that our kids and our grandkids are the ones who are going to have to pick up the tab. Aside from the fact that that is obviously unfair and none of us wants to pass the burden of debt for our spending on to others, it really is going to restrict what it is that generation can do to meet its own challenges to educate its kids, to provide health care to its kids and themselves and to provide for the national defense.

We have the capacity to impose on ourselves the same rule that families have to impose on themselves every month when they sit around the kitchen table and go over their checkbook and try to figure out how, at the end of the month, they are going to make the checkbook balance. And that is to accept the burden of the discipline of paying for our tax cut proposal or our spending proposal when we make the proposal.

Voters know that. They want fiscal responsibility. In fact, their concern about the deficit rightly is at the top of their agenda. We have had extraordinary circumstances here that have required extraordinary actions with the economy going off the cliff, with the stimulus spending and with the legacy of a war in Iraq and Afghanistan on the credit card.

We have restored truth in budgeting so that those two things, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, are now on the budget. So it is painful because we are seeing in black and white what the cost of those enterprises are, and we know that we are going to have to pay for them. We are not trying to hide it. We are being direct.

The American people are entitled to that candor, and they are entitled to have us respond by making certain that we, going forward, adopt pay-as-you-go principles. It is not just good in theory, and it is not just good for conservatives or liberals. It is good for everybody.

I'm a big supporter, I think most of us are, that in this country we achieve the goal of having all of our citizens covered by health care. Every citizen should be covered and have access to health insurance. Every citizen should help pay for it. And if you lose your job, you shouldn't lose your health care. The President has acknowledged that as worthy as that goal is, we must pay for it. And the health care bill that we are now considering has to be paid for. What a difference from what happened with the prescription drug program that was largely put on the credit card and it is not able to sustain itself or pay for itself.

One of the reasons it is so important to have PAYGO is that it imposes the discipline on us to kick the tires of a program. Health care is a great example. We need it. We have good health care in this country. But the cost is going up at two or three times the rate of inflation, two or three times the rate of profit growth, two or three times the rate of wage growth. So people are falling behind. The middle class is getting squeezed. They are facing higher co-pays and deductibles. By adopting PAYGO, it is forcing us to look at our delivery system and ask yourselves how can we reform the delivery of health care to make it more efficient and provide more value for less money?

In fact, there are examples after examples of how we have, in many cases, excess utilization. So this bill is going to be helpful to all of us. And it is very important that we pass this legislation.

GOVERNMENT-RUN HEALTH CARE WILL LEAD TO RATIONING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, right now Americans all across the country are dealing with this tough economy, many by tightening their belts and by managing their family budgets. Unfortunately, they are looking to Washington, and they are seeing this Congress that is being run by people that don't get what the American people are dealing with across the country.

Spending is out of control here in Washington by this administration and by this Congress. Look at the proposals that we are debating today. Health care in America needs reforms. But with all of the problems that exist, we still have some of the best medical care in the world. In fact, people that live in countries that have a government-run plan and who have the means, come to America to get care because in those countries, government takeover of health care has led directly to rationing of care. And so what are we facing today? We are facing a plan by the President, Speaker PELOSI and others here to have a government takeover of America's health care system.

When you read this bill, and you hear all of this great rhetoric, you hear the

President saying that if you like the plan you have, you can keep it. The problem is, the bill doesn't allow you to keep your health care plan. There is actually a section in their government takeover that allows a health care czar, some bureaucrat in Washington that was never elected to anything, to be able to take away your health care if they don't think that it complies with these new Federal requirements. So if you like what you have, this health care czar can take it away from you.

In fact, if you're uninsured—and all we hear about is the uninsured and that we need to address the problem of the uninsured, and I agree. The thing is when you really break down the numbers and when you look at who is really uninsured, you get to a number of about 7 million people. Once you strip away the illegal aliens and you take away the people who choose not to get health care who are currently eligible, you end up with 7 million Americans. That is a number we can address without blowing up all of the things that work for over 300 million Americans.

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But in their plan, they actually tax some of those very people that are uninsured.

The Congressional Budget Office just gave testimony last week. Unfortunately the chairman of the committee threw the public out of the meeting. It was a secretive meeting that they wouldn't even allow the public to come into. I guess after they heard the testimony, you can see why, because the testimony said, number one, that the costs in this bill are out of control. All of the savings that we heard, that were promised, don't even exist. That's the Congressional Budget Office's testimony.

But then they talked about the taxes, over \$580 billion in new taxes on businesses in their health care bill. There's over \$240 billion of penalties that would be applied to American families that maybe don't go along with this new government takeover of health care. There's \$29 billion of taxes on uninsured people in their bill. The Congressional Budget Office gave the specific testimony that this bill, this government takeover of health care, adds \$29 billion in new taxes on the backs of uninsured Americans. And this is as they're running around saying that they want to help uninsured Americans. I know a lot of uninsured Americans out there that don't think \$29 billion of new taxes on their backs is the kind of help that they want. When you look at this bill, you start to realize that what they're doing, what they're proposing, is the very government takeover where rationing of care would exist, where a government bureaucrat can get in between the relationship of you and your doctor. It's the same thing that's happened in Canada, it's the same thing that's happened in England, where unfortunately just yester-

day we saw the story of a 22-year-old who was denied lifesaving care, denied a transplant by this government bureaucracy that exists in England that rations care.

I serve on the Energy and Commerce Committee where this bill is currently being debated. We were in committee till 12:30 in the morning last night. We had an amendment that would have prohibited a Federal bureaucrat in Washington from interfering between the relationship of an American citizen and their doctor. That's the most sacrosanct relationship that should exist. Nobody should come between the relationship between you and your doctor. Yet they voted down that amendment. So clearly this is about rationing. Their proposal is not about reforming health care, because there's bipartisan agreement on the reforms that need to be made to address the real problems that exist in health care. What their bill is about is a government takeover. It's growing government more. It's adding more to the Federal deficit. Hundreds of billions of dollars by CBO testimony would be added to the Federal deficit, at a time when Americans are saying, Congress, Washington, control spending. Get a grip. People saw that the stimulus didn't work. There are no jobs.

This bill is a horrible idea. Government should not be taking over our health care system and interfering in the relationship between us and our doctor.

MAKING STATUTORY PAYGO A REALITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MELANCON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If we do not begin paying our bills today, we will continue to short-change future generations who face higher taxes and cuts to Federal investments in priorities such as education, health care and national security. In order to ensure our long-term fiscal sustainability, we must all work together and return to the proven, effective pay-as-you-go rules that brought our Federal budget to balance in the 1990s.

We now have a President who is committed to changing the fiscal course of this country. Together, we are committed to putting an end to the reckless fiscal policies and out-of-control spending of the past that has given us the record deficits we see today. To that end, the President has charged Congress with passing statutory PAYGO, and we have an obligation to see that this critical piece of legislation reaches his desk for signing.

Our Federal Government simply cannot continue to live beyond its means, mortgaging our future on the backs of our children and our grandchildren. Re-instituting statutory PAYGO will send

a message to the American people that their government is serious about putting the country back on stable economic footing. The time to act is now. The President has put his words into action and I look forward to working with the Blue Dogs and my colleagues in the House and the Senate to make statutory PAYGO a reality again in this country.

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, American families and small business owners are struggling with high health care costs. They're also struggling with access to a doctor; getting to see a doctor and establishing a relationship with that doctor so that you can really lead a healthier life-style, building the kind of trust that's necessary so that the doctor knows the patient and knows what it's going to take to lead them along a healthier pathway and having the patient trust the doctor so that the advice that they're being given is something that they will adhere to. American families are struggling, small business owners are struggling, and we have to do something about this.

Republicans believe we should reform health care, but we need to do it responsibly and in a very, very thoughtful way so as to not disrupt the system that we currently have. If you have health insurance that you like that leads to a relationship with a doctor, you can keep it. But we don't want to see a system completely devastated or disrupted. We want to build off of what works.

I am a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, and we worked on the bill in the House which outlines the President's plan; and that bill doesn't do near enough to provide good, accessible health care. Furthermore, it's a very expensive bill. The Congressional Budget Office has just started looking at this and it's seeing a very expensive bill that's going to add significantly to the deficit.

As a physician who has practiced medicine for over 20 years, I look at this and I say, whoa, wait a minute, let's get this right. It's more important to get it right than to rush into something and do it very hastily and cause disruption in the health care system where we have some things that are working. One of the speakers earlier mentioned the fact that we've got in fact in effect the finest health care in the world. We've got the most highly trained doctors and nurses. We have people from all over the world coming here to train. We have those who live in other countries who come here to get their health care. But we have a cost problem, we have an insurance problem, and we need to fix that, and we need to make sure that insurance